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FACTORS HELPING TO INCREASE COTTON PRODUCTION IN CHINA

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[Summary: Many factors have helped to increase cotton production in China. The use of improved seed, larger quantities of fertilizer, insecticides, better implements, and a more general reliance on irrigation, have all contributed toward this increase in production. More scientific methods of cultivation have also helped. A good market for this cotton is assured by the greater production of cotton yarn and cotton cloth in the mills whose number has been increased by recent construction.]

In China, cotton production has increased year by year. In 1949, the average cotton production for all China was 21.4 catties of ginned cotton per mou [one mou equals 1/6 acre]. Within 3 years, in 1952, this average had risen to 31.4 catties, an increase of 46.7 percent.

Increased yield has been aided by the use of improved seed. From 1950 on, the Central People's Government has promoted the use of better cottonseed, supplying a total of 310 million catties. By 1953, the acreage planted with better grade fine-fibre cotton was 24 times that before liberation. This better grade seed will produce from 10 to 20 percent more than the local variety. A survey in 1951 of 12 important cotton-producing haies of Hopei Province showed that the better-grade cottonseed produced averages of 96-118 catties of unginned cotton while local varieties produced only 84 catties.

In the last few years there has been a great increase in the use of oil-seed-cake fertilizers and chemical fertilizers. It is estimated that more than half the cotton acreage in all China uses oil-seed-cake and chemical fertilizers. In the Northeast one-third of the cotton farmers put ammonium sulfate on their fields.

Spraying and dusting also helps increase production. Within 4 years the government has supplied more than 600,000 items of spraying equipment. In 1952, the government supplied 79 million catties of insecticides and 380,000 sprayers. It is estimated that by such measures the government saved about one million piculs of ginned cotton from loss by insects in 1951 and 1952.

In cotton cultivation the use of better plows has increased production. In Hopei Province one model worker, Wang Chih-t'ung, using a new-type plow, produced 45 more catties of unginned cotton per mou than those who, under the same general conditions, had used the old-type plows.

More general use of irrigation has also helped increase cotton production. The cotton acreage under irrigation has increased in all of China to more than 8 million mou. In Hopei, Shansi, and Shensi provinces more than one-fourth of the cotton under cultivation is irrigated. In the region where water for irrigation is drawn from the Yellow River through the Wei Ho, the irrigated cotton acreage averaged 50-60 more catties per mou than land not under irrigation.

Another aid to increased cultivation is the more scientific methods promoted by the Government Agricultural Experiment Stations, the State Farms, and the Technical Guidance Stations. Farmers have gained knowledge from exchange of experience and from learning the more advanced Soviet methods of cultivation. Gains are seen in such places as the irrigated cotton fields of Ching-hui-chu in Shensi

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Province. Here the farmers had never tried rotation of crops or irrigation, with the result that the cotton yield declined year after year, until it averaged only 25 catties per mou. In the winter of 1952, the Central People's Government and the local authorities organized an investigating team which, under the guidance of a Soviet Specialist An-tung-lo-fu [Antonov?] made a thorough investigation of the cultivation methods employed in this irrigated area. The Shensi Provincial Bureau of Agriculture and Forestry promoted the use of improved methods suggested by this team and, as a result, the cotton production per unit of area was considerably increased. In 1953, the 353,000 mou of irrigated cotton averaged about 60 catties of ginned cotton per mou. This was 1.4 times the rate of 1952.

Increased production raised the standard of living for cotton growers.

A good market for this increase of cotton is assured by the larger number of cotton mills and the greater production of cotton yarn and cotton cloth. Cotton yarn production in 1952 was twice that of 1949. Cotton cloth production had a corresponding increase, with almost three times the production of 1949.

However, even with this rapid increase in cotton yarn and cotton cloth production the average individual buying of cotton goods in China is only one-third that of the Soviet people. If each person in China each year used, on the average, 10 feet more of cotton cloth than now, an annual increase of 50 million bolts of cotton cloth would be needed. Cotton production would have to be increased by 5.5 million piculs. For a long period of time, the production of more cotton will be one of the great tasks of the people of China.

An important aid in increased production will be an increase production per unit of area which at the moment is only one-third that of the Soviets. In 1952, the average Soviet production was 280 catties of unginned cotton while the average in China is less than 100 catties of unginned cotton per mou. However, some individuals in China have produced more than 1,000 catties per mou which indicates that a great increase is possible.

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